

VZCZCXRO8454
RR RUEHDE
DE RUEHKU #2929 2031356
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 221356Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5873
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KUWAIT 002929

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FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: IT PAYS TO BE AN MP: PARLIAMENTARIANS' ATTRACTIVE
COMPENSATORY PACKAGE

REF: KUWAIT 1505

¶1. In addition to a monthly salary of 2,300 KD (\$7,950), the fifty elected Members of Kuwait's Parliament receive a number of other lucrative benefits. Each MP is provided with a new Ford or Lincoln to drive while serving in Parliament; the Speaker and Deputy Speaker receive a new vehicle worth 15,000 KD (\$51,850). MPs are also provided with a free 1,500 liter per month fuel allowance; a full-time driver with a monthly salary of 120 KD (\$415); a mobile phone with free telephone calls up to 1,200 KD (\$4,150) per year; and a seven-member administrative staff, including at least two women. These staff members are on loan from other government departments and in addition to their salary the Government pays them a monthly bonus of 130 KD (\$450) for university graduates and 100 KD (\$345) for all others. When MPs travel abroad on official business they are also entitled to 350 KD (\$1,210) per day for food, accommodation, and transportation.

¶2. Per Article 121 of the constitution, MPs are prohibited from being appointed on the board of directors of a company and from receiving government-funded grants or "concessions." In addition, they cannot buy, sell, or rent any property to/from the Government, "except by public auction or tender." Nevertheless, many, if not most, MPs either have their own companies or sit on the Boards of private firms. The Kuwaiti media has repeatedly pointed out that this is technically illegal, but the Government has not taken any punitive action against the MPs in question. Some MPs are reportedly planning to submit a proposal to monitor the performance of all lawmakers and prevent them from serving on the board of any company during their parliamentary term or from using their parliamentary immunity to advance their personal interests. The proposal would also ban MPs from working, even for free, in any non-governmental organization on a temporary or permanent basis.

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